/68 cont'd/

4. Magic

754 The Miao have a kind of "black magic," which is intended to injure other people. If a man has a bad enemy, he requests a Taoist priest to avenge him through sorcery. The method is to write the enemy's name on a piece of paper, which is nailed up in a grove of trees. The enemy's soul is thus confined, and he will fall ill with a strange disease and slowly sink into a half-alive state. The only way the victim can be saved is to get hold of the sorceror and compel him to release the soul from imprisonment.

755 This was what I heard from the Miao. Whether this magic was really workable I still do not know. However, I once encountered a disabled man in the home of a Li headman. I was told that this disablement was due to the fact that when this man was a follower of a Li headman who had attacked the Miao, he had killed a great many people. For revenge, the Miao had confined his soul. Might this story be true!

5. Superstition

●823 The Miao believe in feng-shui /Chinese system of geomancy/. When I was in Ang-chi village, Lu Tsun-ying, the chia-ch'ang, told me that the reason the Miao people there were so poor was because the feng-shui was not good there. He also pointed out how the feng-shui was poor. The mountain peaks were too sharp, there was a lack of springs, and the aspect was too narrow, so that there was nothing from which wealth could issue. His cousin, a pao-ch'ang, 756 also asked me whether I knew how to practice feng-shui. I gave him a negative answer. He said that he would save more money to enable him to engage a good master of feng-shui, who would find for him a place of prosperity.

787 They also believe in fortunetelling through horoscopes and the practice of physiognomy. While I was there a number of them asked me whether I knew how to read horoscopes and practice physiognomy. /69/ There are some aspects of their social life that have led the Miao to believe in such superstitions. We will discuss it in detail in the next chapter.

/180 cont./

*[782] and reads the petition. After this, amidst the sound of gong and drum, he gives one long blast of the horn. The host then gets up and stands at the side. Holding the prayer box in the left hand and shaking the ritual knife in his right hand, the sorcerer-
[718] priest takes the three-step walk toward the Peach Spring cave, uttering the incantation to present money. After a passage has been recited, he hangs the ritual knife on his right wrist and gesticulates with his finger as if writing characters on the prayer box. Then he continues his incantation, blowing on the horn at the same time. After two blows, holding the whip in his right hand, he stands up, and first facing inward, he strikes the ground once with the whip, then facing outward, he strikes the ground twice. Turning once more inward, he again strikes the ground, and also blows the horn, Then he utters another incantation passage. Then he turns, facing out the door, and puts the prayer box on a small table and blows the horn once more. When the incantation is finished, he raps the horn with the knife and utters an incantation invoking the meritorious spirits. After the incantation,
*[787] he divines, and, when the sheng or the yang chiao is obtained, he shakes the ritual knife several times, facing the man /men?/ beating the drum and gong, ordering him to stop, and then utters an invocation pledging in wine to the meritorious shen. After pledging with wine three times and pouring it three times, he asks the shen to accept the items on sacrifice. When he divines and the
*[787] sheng chiao appears, he knows that the shen have accepted the articles, and then he burns the four prayer boxes and removes the items on sacrifice. He puts the ritual knife and the whip on the ground, utters an incantation, and following the eight directions
• [823] in sequence, east, west, south, north, northeast, southwest, northwest, and southeast, he takes the three-step walk, to make a square, and stamps once on the ground with his feet. After he has gone past the eight directions, he turns to the right of the Peach Spring cave and utters the incantation to invoke the shen and the ancestral spirits of the host. After the incantation, the sorcerer-priest picks up the whip and the ritual knife he had put on the ground and takes the chiao-tzu and the spirit tablets,

/180 cont./

*[782] *[787] and recites the names of the shen. After he has finished, he once more lays all the articles on the ground, and begins to divine for the luck of the host's whole family. After the sheng chiao is obtained he puts back the articles in their original places. /181/ The sorcerer-priest then picks up the tablets with his right hand, holds the horn in his left hand, and walks to the doorsill. Putting his left foot on the doorsill, he first blows the horn and then slaps the door three times with the tablets. The beating of the gong and the drum ceases, and he utters the fa-ling /literally, "give the order"/ incantation. After this, the beating of the gong and the drum is resumed, and the sorcerer-priest blows his horn, standing facing the Peach Spring cave. Holding the ritual knife in his right hand, he waves a little at the drum and gong beater to stop, and utters an incantation inviting the shen to mount the altar.

The fifth part is Chieh Chieh /"connecting (or making welcome) the streets/, and is divided into three sections. The first section is Chin-chou Street. The sorcerer-priest wears a [292] red kerchief around his head and a red garment. First, holding the horn in his right hand, he blows it once, and then changing it over to his left hand, he waves the ritual knife with his right hand. He takes the three-step walk in ffont of the Peach Spring cave and recites the Chieh Chieh /"connecting the streets"/ in- [823] cantations. It is divided into incantations for the five directions, east, south, west, north, and center. When he utters the incantation for the east, he faces the inside of the house. For the south and the west he faces outside. For the north he faces inside again, and for the center, outside again. Each time he finishes reciting, he must blow his horn and circle around twice.

The second section is Wu-lui Street /"the street of five thunders"/. The costume of the sorcerer-priest and his ritual implements, as well as the ritual, are the same as those for the first section. The incantations except for a few phrases are also the same.

The third section is Lo-wang Street. The costume of the sorcerer-priest is the same as above. He holds the whip in his left hand and shakes the ritual knife with his right hand, takes

amined. If the white of the egg shows a concave dent, then it is a proof of the existence of the poison. Thereupon the members of the sick person's family would shout curses outside the gate, so that the dispenser of the venom would come by himself or herself to get rid of it. Also there are cases where sick persons escape to other villages to avoid attack by these poisonous agents. We have closely investigated many areas but have not yet discovered a single instance of some one who actually possesses poisonous insects or medicines. This is after all pure superstition. But the Miao people believe in it strongly and take every precaution against it. A woman who is suspected of possessing poisonous insects may never expect to be married, and a man who is found to own such medicines is subject to lynching and expulsion. The belief of the I tribe in this connection is less deeply rooted than that of the Miao. 754 787

(16) Feng-shui. The Chung-chia in An-shun believe in Feng-shui /wind and water/ much more than the local Chinese. In the Chung-chia village there are one or two persons noted for their ability to divine Feng-shui such as in building a house and erecting grave mounds, the fortune of the offspring being dependent upon how these are located in relation to nature, mountain and river, and their shapes and conditions. It is further believed that the unusual rocks and overhanging cliffs as well as the green trees and gigantic vines in the mountains are endowed with the spiritual essence of the universe which serves to suppress the baleful vapors of the valleys and rivers. So even though it is known that a certain mountain yields valuable minerals, people will not mine them for fear of upsetting the stabilizing influence of these precious substances. 787 823

Of all the foregoing superstitions the 000

8: Graham E-5 (1921-1936) 1937 AE5 Miao AE5

823 I can hardly affirm that the Ch'uan Miao believe that the world is flat. The untutored Miao does not know that the world is round, but he sees and climbs and farms so many hills and cliffs and mountains that he regards the world as only comparatively flat. The world has an end somewhere, but he has no conception of its size.

772 Above the sky, or rather on it, is a level land where the souls remain after death with the souls of their ancestors. This paradise is Ntsə nj lʌu GʌU bi or the level land of Ntsə. There are no hills to climb and there is neither sickness nor death. The sun shines every day. Although there are no rainstorms there is no lack of moisture. Those who live there do not farm but find in the forests such things to eat as berries and fruit, as people are supposed to have done on earth in very ancient times. They are given food, clothing and money by their descendants through the memorial and calendar festivals. It is a good place to live in but not as good as this world. There is a ladder to the sky, but ordinarily mortals cannot go up. Some have swooned away and returned and related to their friends what they saw in the level land of Ntsə.

Under this earth there is another world inhabited by dwarfs. These are called in Chinese *sao pa jén* 掃把人 or broom people, because they are as tall as small Chinese brooms or about two feet high. They farm and have their own king, soldiers and government. They live very much as people on this earth, but they have much smaller houses, farms, etc. One Miao fell into dwarfland through a hole in the floor of the emperor's palace, and later came back to the earth through a crack in the ground caused by a drought. When rain finally came, the ground swelled and closed up the crack.

In a special region dragons live or at least the king of dragons lives there. Other stories are told of fishermen who hooked the king of dragons or other dragons with fishhooks in rivers and creeks. To reach the palace of the dragon king it is always necessary to go down through pools of water. When the palace is reached, everything is normal and dry.

There is a special region where demons live where it is always dark. People rarely go there although certain legends describe it.

177 775 The Chinese idea of three principal souls or *hun* 魂 and seven lesser souls or *p'o* 魄 is accepted by these people. The *hun* are called in Ch'uan Miao pl'ei and the *p'o* are called *mpl'o*. Of the three principal souls, one remains in the tomb, one goes to Ntsə's level country. One stays among the beams under the roof of the house. On the other hand, one is supposed to be reincarnated. The ideas of reincarnation and of the three *hun* and seven *p'o* were learned evidently from the Chinese; my impression is that they have not been well assimilated.

10: Graham E-5 (1921-?)/954 AE5 Miao AE5

impersonate cows and pretend to fight and to cause the death of six. Women rub soot onto the men's faces until they are black. A woman carries a dummy child which is beaten to pieces. There is much fun and laughter. 765

There is also a ceremony performed about once in three years making offerings to the souls of deceased domestic animals.

In addition, there is the ceremony of eating new grain, and there are at least 11 calendar festivals which in date, method of conducting the ceremonies, and purpose correspond very closely to those of the Chinese.

RELIGION

One can easily get the impression that the Ch'uan Miao have no religion, and they themselves sometimes confirm this impression. They have no religious organizations, no organized priesthood, no temples, and no visible gods. It is my opinion, however, that they are a very religious people. Through their daily toil, by the help of their ancestors and the gods, and by means of religious ceremonies, they hope to achieve a long and satisfying life in which the basic needs of food, sex, protection, security, and play and recreation are insured, and after death to join their departed ancestors in the ancient level land of Ntzī. Two of the fundamental elements in their religion are belief in demons, which cause diseases and other calamities and which must be exorcised by the magician and his ceremonies, and the commemoration of their ancestors by ceremonial rites and offerings. 769 776

"The untutored Ch'uan Miao does not know that the world is round, and he has seen so many mountains that he does not regard it as entirely flat. There is an end somewhere, but he does not know how big the world is." 823 ●

Above or on the sky is a level land where the souls of the deceased remain with their ancestors after death. It is called the ancient level land of Ntzī (ntzə³ Ti·⁵ lau² gau¹ bi⁶). Here there are no hills to climb and neither sickness nor death. The sun shines every day, and although there are no rains there is no lack of moisture. People do not farm but gather fruit and berries in the forests, which are much as the forests were on the earth in very ancient times. At the memorial and calendar festivals the offerings of their descendants provide them with food, clothing, money, and wine to satisfy their needs. Formerly there was a ladder connecting the earth and the sky or paradise, but in recent times this connection has been broken. 772 [796]

Under the earth is another world, the land of dwarfs or Lilliputians who are about 2 feet tall. They live much like people on the earth, having houses, farms, a king, soldiers, and a government. One Miao entered this world through a natural cave in a mountain and remained so long that many of the people on earth had forgotten him. Another fell through a hole in the floor of the emperor's palace and after two or three years was able to crawl back onto the earth through a crack caused by a drought. When rain came again the earth swelled up and closed the crack.

Some of the stories speak of a dark place inhabited by demons and presided over by a demon king. 775

The Chinese idea of three principal souls and seven lesser souls, and of karma 776

[24 cont.]

764 All night they beat drums and play liu-sheng (6-reed wind instrument). The following day is the day of mourning when friends and relatives bring along different kinds of gifts as expressions of condolence. Some would bring a basketful of glutinous rice; some, a jug of wine; others, firecrackers, candles, incense and paper money. The host would slaughter a buffalo or a horse to feed the mourners. At the same time he has to kill a male dog so that in the nether world the dog can watch the buffalo or the [775] horse. The four legs of the animal are divided among the married children of the family and close relatives, distant relations being given only other parts of the meat. When there are not many relatives, each can bring home a piece of meat weighing about three or four catties. On the third day the corpse is lowered into the coffin after being clothed in four, six or eight black garments as well as shoes and socks. The number of sheets on which the corpse lies depends upon the number of children of the deceased. In case the deceased is childless, he is wrapped only in one sheet. There are three kinds of coffins: the rich use two coffins, the inner and the outer. Ordinary families use the outer coffin; the poor use the inner coffin, also known as the "fire box." The inner and the outer coffins are finished with black paint, but the "fire box" is made of plain wood. All coffins have their fixed dimensions. The inner coffin is one inch thick, five feet two inches long [sic], one foot and two inches wide at the feet and one foot three inches wide at the head. The outer coffin is one foot eight inches thick at the head, nine inches thick at the feet for the upper board, and eight inches thick for the bottom board, the total length being five feet eight inches, the width at the feet being one foot five inches, and the width at the head, two feet. The Miao have the strongest ob-

● [823] jection to the presence of iron or [25] copper in the coffin. At the time of burial the family members have to make a last minute inspection for fear some one might slip into the coffin some metal pieces. They believe that "to bury the dead with iron and copper will cause annihilation to the whole family."

As soon as a corpse is laid in a coffin, the burial takes place. This is called "fu-shan" [supporting the mountain]. The larger

/10 cont./

174 [173] The description by the Meau concerning their later history from the time of Hoang-ti up to our day agrees with the Chinese reports. As a missionary, Savina sees in these traditions of the Meau in connection with religious elements, on which he reports and which I shall go into later (in the chapter, "Myths and Fairy Tales"), a confirmation of the legends of the Old Testament. Moreover, they provide the basis for his complicated reconstruction of the supposed migrations of the Meau. Now it is true that the Meau whom I interviewed in Thailand also speak of a country that is supposed to have had such long nights, but I did not find the other statements confirmed. Incidentally they [823] would presuppose that the Meau knew of the spherical shape of the earth, since the author speaks of "antipodes." But this is by no means the case. On the other hand, /11/ one may probably agree with Savina's remark (1) that it is not known when the Meau en-

1. II, p. vii.

countered the Chinese for the first time and that in any case this was in prehistoric times.

[648] We have just as little exact information as to how long the Meau lived in peace with the Chinese. Wieger is of the opinion that it was over a period of time from the fortieth to the thirtieth century B. C. that, as Savina (2) reports, "they did not disturb

2. II, p. viii.

175 648 each other." This harmony ended, according to Savina's reports, around the twenty-seventh century B. C., since the Meau began to be concerned over the rapid development of the Chinese and attacked them. The sources for this first disturbance of the erstwhile harmony are, it is true, of Chinese origin! At the beginning, the Meau allegedly were successful, but were finally defeated by the Chinese under Huan Yuan. Nevertheless, they refused to accept him or his successor as emperor and waged war against the Chinese during the first centuries of Chinese history

/188 cont./

789 [753] Since there is an inclination to trace sicknesses back to the influence of evil spirits, all the means used against them are also used in the fight against sickness. As has been described in the chapter, "Life in the Community," section on "Naming and Admission into the Family Community," for protection against /189/ sickness, strings are tied around the children's wrists, and metal rings can also be used for this. The effectiveness of many amulets pertains at any given time to a certain spirit, but magical agents with a polyvalent effect, so to speak, are also made. Such magical agents are brewed out of the most effective substances known against certain individual spirits and therefore have a general effect. For instance, one takes the root [824] of a certain kind of mimosa and adds arrow poison, pandanus leaves, and the root of a certain plant cultivated for this purpose in the rice fields, but whose name I could not discover. Since each of these agents is in itself protection against certain spirits, the effect of the mixture, according to the conception of the Méau, is comprehensive.

[823] Besides such vegetable protective agents, copper plays a special role among the metals in the making of such agents, since magical properties are attributed to it. Objects made of this [301] metal, such as rings for the neck, arms, or legs, are supposed to protect one against evil spirits. It is therefore primarily the children who are provided with such magical ornaments by their worried parents.

[756] The shamans, too, usually make their amulets out of the substances named and sell them at a small price. The view is not, however, that spirits are conjured into such amulets, but only that these amulets are protection against evil spirits. There [776] is, for instance, no spirit of arrow poison, of mimosa, or of the other substances mentioned; they merely have a warding-off and thus protective effect. Savina (1), too, mentions the amulets [714]

1. II, p. 257.

and reports that in time of war some that are supposed to make warriors invulnerable are made.